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MY VIEW

Community celebrates Chanukah together

By Berel Levertov Dec 11, 2017



Rabbi Berel Levertov, left, Mayor Javier Gonzales and U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján marking last season's Chanukah on the Plaza. Courtesy photo

We need to reignite Jerusalem. No, I don't mind the lights of the mosque that were shut off in a recent protest. We don't need to reignite the day of rage. That has been burning since for as long Jews have been walking in Israel.

We need to reignite a Jerusalem that doesn't worship Washington, London, or anything other than Jerusalem for that matter.

Yes, it's wonderful to hear the president of the United States of America say that he is recognizing Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It is disheartening to hear the rest of the world go off the rails about the danger of this igniting a day of rage (huh?). It also is surprising to hear fellow Jewish brothers and sisters describing this declaration and the response to it in messianic or apocalyptic terms, when fundamental to our belief is that our relationship to Israel is by virtue of G-d's promise to Abraham and his descendants thereafter — and that alone.

As valuable as the world's affirmation of our relationship with Israel might be, it is even more important to make sure that this affirmation does not replicate the basis of the relationship in the first place.

We need to appreciate when the nations of the world give that support, but seeing that support as a "source" of blessing is borderline idolatry. As Jewish people, we know that we have only one source of blessing — and that is Hashem.

This Shabbat we read about Joseph who was sold into slavery by his own brothers and then thrown into prison by his master. One of the deepest messages of the story, is that there really isn't anyone to rely on, except for G-d Himself, who has His own master plan of exile, slavery and redemption. We have to do our share, but mainly in the realm of our relationship with Almighty G-d.

As critical as Washington's support of Israel is, our worship of that support is more dangerous than any benefit that could accrue from that relationship.

As we come up to Chanukah, we remember that lighting up Jerusalem doesn't come from the White House, and shutting the lights off in Jerusalem doesn't come from Al Aqsa. The lights of Jerusalem are eternally the lights of Torah and Mitzvah that are ignited from the Shabbat candles lit in our homes, the Tefillin wrapped around our arms, lighting the menorah this Tuesday night — right here in Santa Fe.

And in doing so, we can hope for the time when the lights were be rekindled, and "my home — the Beit Hamikdosh rebuilt and restored will be called a home of prayer for all the nations" from Washington and London, Santa Fe to Cairo, and everywhere in between.

Chanukah begins Tuesday. We kindle the candles every evening for eight nights, after nightfall. Except on Friday, when it's kindled before sunset (4:30 p.m.).

Join, Mayor Javier Gonzales, U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, Councilor Renee Villarreal and many other Santa Feans will be on the Plaza at 3 p.m. Sunday, along with acrobats, chicken soup, gelt, live music, and of course, the lighting of the giant menorah. Let's kindle and shine these everlasting flames, and proclaim our commitment to bringing more light into the world with our Torah and Mitzvot. Other community Chanukah events include a concert, a shabbat dinner and Chanukah on ice. (See www.SantaFeJCC.com/chanukah2017 for details.)

A happy and meaningful Hanukkah to all!

Rabbi Berel Levertov is the rabbi at the Santa Fe Jewish Center-Chabad.

